May 31st, 2025

THE ADVOCATE

NTEU Chapter 66's newsletter

On Fear

By Sterling Price
Chapter 66 Steward

I have to tell you about a unique medical experience. The other day I went to the doctor's office. It's VA doctor and as we know, they are facing the troubles we are: Staff cuts, budget cuts, intimidation, austerity, etc. The Department of Veteran's Affairs employees are represented by AFGE, the other major federal union. What happens to them will or has happened to NTEU.

One of the general questions medical practitioners ask is whether you are thinking of harming yourself or thoughts related to that.

I took a moment to reply. I told them "No, I don't. I'm afraid." The doctor acknowledged this, and I continued. "... that I haven't done enough. That no matter what I do, I just keep getting set back. But I also know that if I don't do something, I'll just end up asking who will." We both knew exactly what I was talking about.

I was talking about standing up. I was talking about a defensive stance, waiting for my opportunity. I was talking about the work we are doing in the union to defend the rights we have and to pull back those which were ripped from both, all our hands.

"I don't want to be afraid because I have to ask who will. It's me. I will, and that itself is scary. It puts me on the line and makes me culpable... and that's a fear I'd much rather face."

The doctor's statement was reserved. "And you have to hold on to that. You have to do that for yourself, because what you're doing is important. It will help you keep from feeling like you have no control over your life. It's important we make sure you take care of ourselves, or we cannot be good for anyone."

But what they didn't say was "...because what you're doing is important...to us," that the work we are doing on a personal, local and national level is making a difference even if it doesn't immediately make itself obvious. It means that there are people who can't say what they're afraid of because their profession demands so. It's not often that a doctor gestures at how their patient is helping them. I left the doctor's office and said "We were told by national NTEU that this is a marathon, not a sprint. We (NTEU) are in it for the long haul. I'm not going to let them scare me away."

There's work to be done.

A Speech

By Daniel Scharpenburg
Chapter 66 Vice President

On May 10th Congressman Emanuel Cleaver II held a rally in support of the Federal Service. The following is a transcript of the speech Chapter 66 Vice President Daniel Scharpenburg gave at the event:

Someone asked me, "Daniel, why do you do to so many rallies?", and I said, "Because we are making history in Kansas City." We are making history… It's appropriate to cheer.

We are making history because we are standing up and we are saying that what is happening is not okay… What is happening is not okay.

And we are incredibly grateful to the congressman, Mr. Cleaver, for putting on this rally and for standing up for us.

I don't know if everyone knows this, but there are 34,000 government workers in Kansas City. Thirty-four thousand.

So it's not just about us federal workers really. If DOGE comes and eliminates 1/3 of those jobs, Kansas City's in trouble. Right? That is an unacceptable increase in the unemployment rate. So I know the Representative is standing up for us because he's a compassionate and caring man who cares about what's right, but he's also standing up for us because he cares about Kansas City.

My name is Daniel Scharpenburg, and I'm a Union Man.

I am a proud member of National Treasury Employees Union Chapter 66. I am blessed to serve on the board. I am the first vice president of that chapter, and we represent SIX THOUSAND IRS workers that work in that beautiful building right over there. There are SIX THOUSAND of us.

And what we have faced is the administration.. and I say "the administration", I do not say his name… The administration has been undermining our union contract, and that is not OK.

So we have seen since… since the administration took office, we have seen repeated attempts to undermine our union contract and we are having to go to court again and again, because the administration wants to do that, and that is lawless. That is not OK.

So now, the administration has taken additional steps because they think they're going to lose in court, and they are, (and) they're trying to bust our union. They're trying to make it illegal to have unions in the federal sector. And that is "union busting".

What's Disgusting?
Union Busting.

So we are here today, just to say, that what's happening is not OK and we are NOT going to be silenced, and we are not going to stop, and we are not going to go down quietly. We are going to stand up and fight until the bitter end, and when we're under attack, we fight back… and when they come to strip our rights away, we are going to give them Hell every time. EVERY time.

So I want you to ask you to raise your fist in solidarity with me.

We are standing up.

Get involved! Have your voice heard!

Now more than ever- it's important to be civically engaged- here's some resources to get informed and involved:

NTEU Action:

NTEU Political Insider:

Rallies in the KC area:

Standing Together in Uncertain Times

By Shannon Ellis
Chapter 66 President

There's a heaviness I hear in the voices of our members. A silence in hallways that once echoed with purpose and pride. Every day, federal employees—our coworkers, our friends, our family—walk into government buildings no longer filled with the comfort of stability but with the quiet fear of what's coming next.

Will I lose my job?

Will my insurance be there when my family needs it most?

Will I be forced into early retirement after decades of service—and how will I survive on less?

Will I still be able to pay my mortgage, my rent, my car payment?

Can I still afford to send my child to college?

These aren't abstract concerns. They are real. They are raw. They sit in the pit of our stomachs and follow us home. Many of you have worked your entire careers with the simple promise that your dedication to the American people would be honored with job security, fair pay, and dignity.

That promise feels more fragile than ever.

And what is perhaps most painful is the waiting. The sitting in limbo. The unknowing. Watching press conferences, reading headlines, and asking yourself: Am I next?

When we talk about cuts to federal agencies, it's not just about numbers on a spreadsheet. It's about people—people who make sure Social Security checks go out, that our borders are protected, that disaster relief reaches families in need, that our tax system runs, that healthcare is delivered, that food and drug safety is monitored. It's about you.

When funding is slashed, when programs are eliminated, when staffing is gutted, the American people feel it. They'll wait longer for the services they need. They'll find fewer people on the other end of the phone. They'll lose trust in the institutions we've all worked to uphold.
I know how tired you are. I see it in your eyes and hear it in your voice. The exhaustion of walking into a workplace you once loved, now filled with dread and questions. The heartbreak of feeling abandoned by the very government you serve. The fear of the unknown future for your family, your career, your country.

But I am here to remind you: You are not alone.

You are not just a federal employee. You are part of something bigger. You are part of a union—a family—that stands with you. NTEU stands with you. I stand with you. And across the country, so do thousands of federal employees just like you, whose voices are getting louder, whose courage is growing stronger.

And here's the truth: when we stand together, when we speak up even through exhaustion, when we show up even when we're afraid—that's when we make change. That's when solidarity becomes our shield and our power.

The American people are listening. They are beginning to understand that what happens to their government—our government—will absolutely impact their lives. And the more we speak out, the more they will stand with us.

If you don't know where to begin, start here: Contact your union. Talk to your steward. Ask how you can help. There is a place for every one of us in this fight—for fairness, for dignity, for our future.

We are your brothers. We are your sisters. We are your fellow Americans. And together, we will make a difference.
In Solidarity,

Shannon Ellis
President, NTEU Chapter 66

Call your Senators!

Missouri:
Josh Hawley
(202) 224-6154

Eric Schmitt
(202) 224-5721

Kansas:
Jerry Moran
(202) 224-6521

Roger Marshall
(202) 224-4774